

That helpith litel, that she may do,  
Outake biheest unto my wo.  
And heeste certeyn, in no wyse,  
Withoute yift, is not to pryse.  
Whan heest and deed asundir varie,  
They doon me have a gret contrarie.

**W**HIS am I, possed up and down  
With dool, thought, and confusoun;  
Of my disese ther is no noumbre.  
Daunger and Shame me encumbe,  
Drede also, and Jalousye,  
And Wikked/Tunge, ful of envye,  
Of whiche the sharpe and cruel ire  
ful oft me put in gret martire.  
They han my joye fully let,  
Sith Bialacoil they have bishet  
fro me in prisoun wikkidly,  
Whom I love so entierly,  
That it wol my bane be,  
But I the soner may him see.  
And yit moreover, wurst of alle,  
Ther is set to kepe, foule hir bifalle!  
A rimpel vekke, fer ronme in age,  
frowning and yelow in hir visage,  
Which in awayte lyth day and night,  
That noon of hem may have a sight.  
Now moot my sorwe enforced be.

**A**L soth it is, that Love yaf me  
Three wonder yiftes of his grace,  
Which I have lorn now in this place,  
Sith they ne may, withoute drede,  
Helpen but litel, who taketh hede.  
for here availeth no Swete Thought,  
And Swete/Specche helpith right nought.  
The thridd was called Swete/Loking,  
That now is lorn, without lesing.  
The yiftes were fair, but not forthy  
They helpe me but simply,  
But Bialacoil may loosed be,  
To gon at large and to be free.  
for him my lyf lyth al in dout,  
But if he come the rather out.  
Allas! I trowe it wol not been!  
for how shuld I evermore him seen?  
He may not out, and that is wrong,  
Bicause the tour is so strong.  
How shulde he out? by whos prowesse,  
Out of so strong a fortresse?  
By me, certeyn, it nil be do;  
God woot, I have no wit therto!  
But wel I woot I was in rage,  
Whan I to Love dide homage.

**W**HO was in cause, in sothfastnesse,  
But hirsilf, dame Idelnesse,  
Which me conveyed, thurgh fair prayere,  
To entre into that fair vergere?  
She was to blame me to leve,  
The which now doth me sore greve.  
A foolis word is nought to trowe,  
Ne worth an appel for to lowe;  
Men shulde him snibbe bittirly,  
At pryme temps of his foly.  
I was a fool, and she me leved,

Thurgh whom I am right nought releved,  
She accomplisshed al my wil,  
That now me greveth wondir il.  
Resoun me seide what shulde falle.  
A fool mysilf I may wel calle,  
That love asyde I had not leyde,  
And trowed that dame Resoun seyde.  
Resoun had bothe skile and right,  
Whan she me blamed, with al hir might,  
To medle of love, that bath me shent;  
But certeyn now I wol repent.

**A**ND shulde I repent? Nay parde!  
A fals traitour than shulde I be.  
The develles engins wolde me take,  
If I my lorde wolde forsake,  
Or Bialacoil falsly bitraye.  
Shulde I at mischeef hate him? nay,  
Sith he now, for his curtesye,  
Is in prisoun of Jalousye.  
Curtesye certeyn dide he me,  
So muche, it may not yolden be,  
Whan he the hay passen me lete,  
To kisse the rose, faire and swete;  
Shulde I therfore cunne him maugree?  
Nay, certeynly, it shal not be;  
for Love shal never, if God wil,  
Here of me, thurgh word or wil,  
Offence or complaynt, more or lesse,  
Neither of hope nor Idilnesse;  
for certis, it were wrong that I  
hated hem for hir curtesye.  
Ther is not ellis, but suffre and thinke,  
And waken whan I shulde winke;  
Abyde in hope, til Love, thurgh chaunce,  
Sende me socour or allegeaunce,  
Expectant ay til I may mete  
To geten mercy of that swete.  
Whylom I thinke how Love to me  
seyde he wolde taken atte gree  
My servise, if unpacience  
Caused me to doon offence.  
He seyde: In thank I shal it take,  
And high maister eek thee make,  
If wikkednesse ne reve it thee;  
But sone, I trowe, that shal not be.

**T**HESSE were his wordis by and by;  
It semed he loved me trewly.  
Now is ther not but serve him wele,  
If that I thinke his thank to fele.  
My good, myn harm, lyth hool in me;  
In Love may no defaute be;  
for trewe Love ne failid never man.  
Sothly, the faute mot nedis than  
As God forbede! be founde in me,  
And how it cometh, I can not see.  
Now lat it goon as it may go;  
Whether Love wol socoure me or slo,  
He may do hool on me his wil.  
I am so sore bounde him til,  
from his servyse I may not fleen;  
for lyf and deth, withouten wene,  
Is in his hand; I may not chese;  
He may me do bothe winne and lese.

And sith so sore he doth me greve,  
Yit, if my lust he wolde acheve  
To Bialacoil goodly to be,  
I yeve no force what felle on me.  
for though I dye, as I mot nede,  
I praye Love, of his goodlihede,  
To Bialacoil do gentilnesse,  
for whom I live in such distresse,  
That I mote deyen for penaunce.  
But first, withoute repentaunce,  
I wol me confesse in good entent,  
And make in haste my testament,  
As lovers doon that felen smerte:  
To Bialacoil leve I myn herte  
Alhool, withoute departing,  
Or doublesse of repenting.

Coment Raisoun vient a L'amant.



**R**aisoun, discrete and wys, and ful plesant,  
And of hir porte ful avenant.  
The righte wey she took to me,  
Which stood in greet perplexite,  
That was posshed in every side,  
That I mist where I might abyde,  
Til she demurely sad of chere,  
Seide to me as she com nere:

**M**YN owne freend, art thou yit greved?  
How is this quarel yit acheved?  
Of Loves syde? Anoon me telle;  
Hast thou not yit of love thy fille?  
Art thou not wery of thy servyse?  
That thee hath pyned in sich wyse?  
What joye hast thou in thy loving?  
Is it swete or bitter thing?  
Canst thou yit chese, lat me see,  
What best thy socour mighte be?  
Thou servest a ful noble lord,  
That maketh thee thral for thy reward,  
Which ay renewith thy turment,  
With foly so he hath thee blent.  
Thou felle in mischeef thilke day,  
Whan thou didest, the sothe to say,  
Obeyaunce and eek homage;  
Thou wroughtest nothing as the sage.  
Whan thou bicam his liege man,  
Thou didist a gret foly than;  
Thou wistest not what fel therto,  
With what lord thou haddist to do.  
If thou haddist him wel knowe,  
Thou haddist nought be brought so lowe;  
for if thou wistest what it were,  
Thou noldist serve him half a yeer,

Not a weke, nor half a day,  
Ne yit an hour withoute delay,  
Ne never han loved paramours,  
His lordship is so ful of shoures.  
Knowest him ought?

**L'Amaunt.** Ye, dame, parde!

**Raisoun.** Nay, nay.

**L'Amaunt.** Yes, I.

**Raisoun.** Wherof, lat see?

**L'Amaunt.** Of that he seyde I shulde be  
Glad to have sich lord as he,  
And maister of sich signory.

**Raisoun.** Knowist him no more?

**L'Amaunt.** Nay, certis, I,  
Save that he yaf me rewles there,  
And wente his wey, I niste where,  
And I abood bounde in balaunce.

**Raisoun.**

**O**, there a noble conisaunce!  
But I wil that thou knowe him now  
Ginning and ende, sith that thou  
Art so anguisshous and mate,  
Disfigured out of astate;  
Ther may no wrecche have more of wo,  
Ne caitif noon enduren so.  
It were to every man sitting  
Of his lord have knowleching,  
for if thou knewe him, out of dout,  
Lightly thou shulde escapen out  
Of the prisoun that marreth thee.

**L'Amaunt.**

**E**, dame! sith my lord is he,  
And I his man, maad with myn honde,  
I wolde right fayn undirstonde  
To knowen of what kinde he be,  
If any wolde enforme me.

**W**OLDE, seid Resoun, thee lere,  
Sith thou to lerne hast sich desire,  
And shewe thee, withouten fable,  
A thing that is not demonstrable.  
Thou shalt here lerne without science,  
And knowe, withoute experience,  
The thing that may not knowen be,  
Ne wist ne shewid in no degree.  
Thou mayst the sothe of it not witen,  
Though in thee it were writen.  
Thou shalt not knowe therof more  
Whyle thou art reuled by his lore;  
But unto him that love wol flece,  
The knotte may unclosed be,  
Which hath to thee, as it is founde,  
So long be knet and not unbounde.  
Now sette wel thyn entencioun,  
To here of love descripcioun.

**L**OVE, it is an hateful pees,  
A free acquitaunce, without relees,  
A trouthe, fret full of falsbede,  
A sikernes, al set in drede;  
In herte is a dispeiring hope,  
And fulle of hope, it is wanhope;  
Wyse woodnesse, and wood resoun,  
A swete peril, in to droune,  
An hevy birthen, light to bere,